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APPLICATION

Of

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For

UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

On

Molding System for Improved Appearance with Simplified Installation

Sheets of Drawings: Three (3)

TITLE: Molding System for Improved Appearance with Simplified Installation

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 RELATED APPLICATIONS:

This is a continuation-in-part application of a prior filed and currently pending application having serial number 10/302,397 having a filing date of 11/22/02.

10 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE: Applicant(s) hereby incorporate herein by reference, any and all U. S. patents, U.S. patent applications, referred to in this application.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION:

15 This invention relates generally to crown molding systems and more particularly to a system adapted for installation with improved appearance with low labor investment.

DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART:

The following art defines the present state of this field:

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Minidis, U.S. D424,709 describes a cove base design.

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Richter, U.S. 1,249,500 describes the combination of interior illumination with the walls of a room, of a removably light confining trough involving a supporting body structure designed to contact with and be securely fastened to the said walls, the lower portion of said body having provided with a ledge; suitable brace members secured to said body above the ledge; a radially disposed member consisting the exposed wall of the trough, which radial member is supported by the said brace members and aforesaid ledge; and lighting means concealed from view with the trough.

Tischler, U.S. 1,315,260 describes a molding formed from a continuous strip of sheet material having a notch in one edge thereof, said strip of material being bent along lengthwise parallel lines thereof crossing said notch, said bends forming a molding face, said 5 molding being folded transversely at said slit to cause those portions of said base contiguous to said slit to form an open corner, and an angular cap of sheet material for covering said open corner.

Goodhouse, U.S. 1,780,125 describes a fixture for indirect illumination, a molding strip 10 including a fixed section constituting a supporting and reflecting means for the source of illumination and a movable section for protecting and concealing the source of illumination and interengageable means of connection provided respectively on said sections, said fixed section having a strengthening flange projecting outwardly therefrom and disposed at an angle with an outer portion of the movable section with which it engages for strengthening 15 and supporting purposes.

McCutcheon, U.S. 1,917,139 describes a new article of manufacture, a base tile comprising an upright body having its lower portion provided with a downwardly inclined lateral extension the end of which is formed with a transverse rabbet extending the entire width of 20 the tile and opening through the top and front face of said extension to provide an open seat for floor surfacing material and an abutment at the end of the extension for engagement with a floor substructure, the walls of the rabbet being disposed at substantially right angles to each other and defining upper and lower straight edges, one of which indicates the level of the floor surfacing material and the other the level of the floor substructure.

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Filsinger, U.S. 3,309,832 describes a ceramic trim element adapted for multi-purpose use in wail structures employing a plurality of ceramic tile assembled in a pattern, comprising: a ceramic body member including: a main body portion of uniform width having a front glazed surface, a glazed edge face, and a back unglazed surface; said main body portion

having adjacent said glazed edge face a longitudinal edge section of reduced thickness providing a longitudinally extending front surface recess; and a leg portion projecting from the back surface of the main body portion at the edge opposite the reduced edge section and generally normal thereto, said leg portion having uniform width for the length of the main
5 body portion and having an outer glazed surface merging with the outer glazed surface of the main body portion, a glazed edge face and a sloping unglazed back face merging with the back unglazed surface of the main body portion.

Wine, U.S. 3,609,927 describes an elongated thin-walled decorative architectural wall
10 molding strip comprising: top and bottom longitudinal edges and transverse end edges at right angles thereto, all of said edges being Coplanar and adapted to lie flush against a supporting wall surface; said molding being provided with a decorative front surface which is deeply contoured throughout a substantial portion of the transverse width of said molding between said top and bottom longitudinal edges, and having a uniform transverse
15 cross-section along the length of each molding; each of the ends of the molding strip having a beveled surface which projects outwardly at a 45° acute angle to the plane of the molding edges and extends across the full transverse width of said molding from said transverse end edge to the contoured front face; said molding being further provided with a series of transverse notches which interrupt said contoured front surface at regular intervals along
20 its length, each of said notches comprising a pair of parallel spaced transverse lines defining the bottom of the notch parallel to and coplanar with said end edges, the space between said pair of transverse lines of each pair being provided with a supplementary contoured surface, each of said transverse lines being the line of intersection of one edge of said supplementary contoured surface with a beveled surface projecting outwardly at a 45° angle to the plane of
25 the molding edges and extending across the full transverse width of said molding from said line of intersection to the contoured front surface, each of said notch beveled surfaces being substantially identical to said end beveled surface; whereby a 90° inside or outside wall corner can be formed with said molding by severing said molding strip along each of both transverse notch lines of a given notch so as to remove said supplementary contour surface

of slid given notch and abutting at the corner said end edges of said transverse notch lines of two adjacent strips.

Roberts, U.S. 4,600,975 describes an indirect lighting assembly consisting of a housing structure and low voltage light tubing for retention therein, said housing structure being a unitarily extruded body having an anchor tab portion extending perpendicularly into a spacer portion and terminating in a light tube housing portion having an open area directing light generally perpendicular to the plane of said spacer portion.

Edwards, U.S. 5,001,877 describes an interior wall partition trim assembly for providing a decorative trim molding at the ceiling-wall junction and corners together with a decorative chair rail trim member for trimming walls and corners intermediate the ceiling and floor, the combination of ceiling trim splice members shaped to fit supportingly inside the abutted ends of elongated hollow ceiling trim moldings and chair rail trim splice members shaped to fit inside the abutted ends of hollow chair rail trim members to position the respective abutted ends in even registration when fastened to a ceiling junction and wall, respectively. The splice members and mounting fasteners are accessible for mounting or demounting by pivotable decorative panels on each ceiling and chair rail trim member which close to hide the respective splice members and fasteners. Right angled corner cap junction members have ceiling trim molding insert adapters. Right angled chair rail corner bodies have chair rail trim member insert adapters. The insert adapters are inwardly offset at an abutment edge from decorative surfaces on said arms matching decorative surfaces on the corresponding trim members when ends of said trim members are positioned to cover insert adapters in contact with an abutment edge. This provides a continuous appearing trim molding decorative surface around corners. The insert adapters are also accessible for mounting and demounting by means of the pivotable decorative panels on ceiling moldings or chair rail trim members. End cap members are provided for open ends of ceiling trim moldings or chair rail trim members.

Azzar et al., U.S. 5,157,886 describes an extruded, thermoplastic baseboard elastomeric molding strip having opposed generally flat front and rear surfaces is provided with a plurality of closely vertically, spaced horizontal, parallel ribs projecting outwardly of the flat 5 front surface over the full surface area thereof. The strip is formed of front and rear surface layers of thermoplastic material of the same durometer hardness with the front surface layer forming at least the tips of the front surface ribs being of a low density thermoplastic material and the balance of the strip being of high density thermoplastic material. The front and rear surface layers may be of contrasting colors. The rear surface of the strip is 10 preferably formed with concave grooves separated by a multiplicity of fine, vertically spaced horizontal, parallel rearwardly projecting ribs with a rear, center rib between adjacent fine ribs, of a larger diameter than adjacent fine ribs separating the rear surface grooves. The rear surface configuration facilitates removing of excess wet adhesive and maintenance of flush adhesive mounting of the molding strip to a building vertical wall.

15 Walker et al., U.S. 5,179,811 describes an improved decorative trimming system for installing crown mold, baseboard and the like to a room including elongated mounting brackets adapted to be secured along room walls extending about the room periphery. Each bracket include a projecting tongue that extends along the length of the bracket. 20 Prefabricated corner pieces of molding are provided with longitudinal grooves extending along the back sides of their legs for receiving the tongues of the mounting brackets in snug fitting relationship. Similarly, straight lengths or strips of molding have grooves formed along their back sides also for receiving the tongues of the mounting brackets. In use, mounting brackets are secured along room walls extending about the room periphery and 25 prefabricated corner pieces are pressed or snapped into position on the mounting brackets. Straight lengths of molding are cut and pressed into place between the ends of opposed corner pieces to finish out the trimming without the need for intricate mitering, coping, or other skills not usually possessed by the average homeowner or do-it-yourselfer.

Juntunen, U.S. 5,199,237 describes a decorative receptacle covering and providing the appearance of a finished joint between the adjacent rough cut ends of two lineal moldings. The receptacle slidably receives the ends of the lineal moldings, covers the ends and allows cutting the moldings to a rough length and rough end cut, thereby reducing or eliminating the need for precision carpentry skills by one installing the moldings. Receptacles can be made for a wide variety of decorative moldings including casing moldings, base moldings, chair rail moldings, and crown moldings.

Kanarek, U.S. 5,226,724 describes a modular, fluorescent, indirect lighting system which may be easily mounted to most surfaces by the user, without any technical knowledge or experience, using just a screwdriver and measuring tape. The system is comprised of a family of plug-in modules, each of which contain an integral power bus, that provides power continuity to the adjacent module, and a gender conversion plug that allows the installer to configure each module so that power is supplied only from female connectors. The system includes a power source module and three sizes of illumination modules, which house single 20, 30 or 40 watt lamps, as well as inside and outside corner modules and both straight and corner adjustable-length modules. Modules selected from this family can be plugged together to create a cove lighting system for a room of almost any size or shape. The complete installation is powered by a neat line cord plugged into a standard wall outlet. And, each module can accommodate a continuous decorative facing strip that both enhances the appearance and conceals the modular nature of the system.

Singhal, U.S. 5,287,667 describes a tile for waterproofing the juncture of a tiled surface and a non tiled surface such as a tub and tile juncture by use of a water proof tile. The waterproof tile consists of a glazed tile surface having a curvature which directs the water away from the juncture, a non glazed surface which is cemented to the tiled wall and a bottom side which holds sealant for sealing against the non tiled surface.

Fulton, U.S. 5,359,817 describes trim moldings such as crown molding, chair rail molding, base molding and door casing for a building. The trim moldings are made of substantially acrylic or polyester rigid thermoset polymer components. The trim moldings may be manufactured to realistically visually simulate moldings made of natural stone. A method of manufacture of the moldings may utilize bulk slabs or blocks of rigid thermoset polymer based materials which are then properly shaped for use as a building trim molding with mechanical material removal methods such as sawing, cutting, sanding, and polishing to achieve the desired size, shape and appearance of molding. The thermoset polymer based moldings are structured with grooves in the backside, with the grooves sized and positioned to snap onto spring biased members of mounting fixtures attached to the building for a removable attachment of the moldings.

Logan et al., U.S. 5,457,923 describes a decorative molding for a corner formed by a ceiling and a vertical wall comprising a thin strip of flexible plastic and is secured to the wall by an attachment allowing the molding strip along its upper and lower edges to be flexible to conform with uneven surfaces in the ceiling and/or wall. In one form the strip is attached to the wall by an adhesive. In another form, a wall track and clip arrangement is utilized to provide easy removal from the wall for paint or wallpaper application. A corner element is provided in one form in which ends of the strips are adhesively secured thereto in overlapping engagement. In another embodiment, the strips are telescopically connected to the corner element.

Pelosi, Jr. et al., U.S. 5,553,431 describes a fabricated structural beam including at least one longitudinally folded member having a web portion and a head portion. In different embodiments, a plurality of folded members may be interleaved with one another to provide configurations of varying load carrying capabilities. In all cases, the folded head portion is made rigid by forming it into a tube that is closed on all sides.

- Brabant, U.S. 5,651,224 describes an architectural molding assembly comprising of straight molding pieces having a decorative outer surface and a channel in the rear surface thereof. A wall attaching plate is slidably secured in the channel and has a slot or an aperture therein to engage with a fastener which is secured to a wall. The fastener may be in the form of a screw
5 or a clamp having a projecting finger. When the attaching plates are engaged by the fasteners they are urged against the wall and maintained there under tension. No nail is inserted in the molding and molding connecting pieces and accordingly the assembly can be easily dismantled and remounted when desired.
- 10 Wu, U.S. 5,694,726 describes a plastic plate assembly used in fitting including a flat and linear retainer plate and a casing having curved surfaces. The retainer plate has an L-shaped retaining strip bending inwardly from either lateral side thereof. Correspondingly, the casing has an L-shaped retaining strip bending outwardly from either lateral side thereof for fitting onto the L-shaped retaining strip. The casing further has one of the lateral sides extending to
15 form a soft extension strip at an end portion thereof. The retainer plate is mounted on the wall first and the casing is secured thereto by means of its L-shaped retaining strips fitting into the L-shaped retaining strips of the retainer plate, with the soft extension strip lying close against the wall to conceal any gaps between the casing and the wall.
- 20 Brooks, U.S. 5,823,655 describes a decorative lighting trim system comprising an assemblage of architectural moldings having a viewable surface which is structured to simulate an architectural trim or molding. The architectural molding is configured to retain lights, and to retain and conceal interconnecting electrical wiring to electrify the lights, in a manner which permits the attachment of the architectural moldings to a building surface.
25 Because the architectural moldings are constructed to appear like conventional trims or moldings, the lighting system is virtually inconspicuous when attached to a house, building or other architectural structure, such as a fence or garage. The architectural moldings are in modular sections having varying selected lengths which allow the user to select the appropriate number and length of modular sections to extend along a given building surface,

such as an eave, gable or window. The modular architectural molding assemblage is designed to be affixed relatively permanently to a building to eliminate the need for yearly seasonal hanging of lighting trim.

5 Hahn, U.S. 6,228,507 describes a prefabricated crown molding strip designed to facilitate one-person installation and composed of plaster that is reinforced by two layers of fiber reinforcement, one of bulk fiberglass intermixed throughout the outer portion of the strip and the ornamentation thereon and a second of a sheet of fiberglass netting generally centrally located as a spine in the strip and substantially coextensive therewith. Two side surfaces of
10 the strip are disposed generally in perpendicular planes for engagement with a wall and a ceiling, and have patterns of longitudinally extending ribs and grooves of predetermined depths for facilitating adhesive mounting of the strip, and also facilitating selective removal of plaster to accommodate irregularities on supporting surfaces. Pre-formed nail holes are molded in preselected nailing locations. Also the method of making crown molding strips in
15 steps providing the above characteristics, in a sequence of pours of plaster in fluid state, the addition of the reinforcing fiber, and formation of the patterns of ribs and grooves.

Ancel, U.S. 6,309,036 describes an elongate back splash molding including a horizontal leg, adapted to be received in an upwardly opening notch provided in a counter top, and a
20 vertical leg, integral with the horizontal leg, adapted to be received by a downwardly opening notch provided in a back splash which is mounted on the counter top rearwardly adjacent the slot. The horizontal leg includes a curvilinear top surface and a front surface joined to the curvilinear surface at via an edge which lies flush with the upper surface of the counter top. The vertical leg includes a front curvilinear surface having a lower end which
25 makes a smooth transition with the curvilinear top surface. The vertical leg also includes an elongate top end face which is downwardly forwardly inclined and is joined to the top front surface along an edge which is flush with the front face of the back splash and an upper end disposed flush with the front face of the back splash. The confronting surfaces of the counter top, back splash and back splash molding, which are formed of non-laminated, non-foamed,

non-coated, plastic solid surfacing material, are adhesively joined to provide a water impervious, virtually imperceptible joint.

Reed, U.S. 6,405,503 describes a corner trim for use with vinyl or aluminum siding, which
5 provide an appearance similar to that provided by the use of cast concrete corner stones at a fraction of the cost. The new corner trim is essentially a shell formed to have the appearance of a corner stone. Like the cast concrete stones it emulates, it is designed to fit over the corner of a structure. It may be manufactured from polymeric vinyl material via either injection molding or sheet forming process, or it may be formed by stamping sheet aluminum sheet. If
10 aluminum is used, some welding may be required at the corners of the trim. A first embodiment of the corner trim incorporates a laminar, perimetric rim at the edges of the shell. When mounted on the building corner, the rim is perpendicular to the walls. A separate perimetric mounting strip is stapled to the wall sheathing on both sides of the building corner. The corner trim is then pressed into place on the corner, with the edges of the corner trim
15 mating with the mounting strip. A plurality of barbs may be employed to secure the rim to the mounting strip. Alternatively, the corner trim may be adhesively bonded to the mounting strip. A preferred embodiment of the corner trim incorporates a perimetric groove having a width slightly greater than the thickness of the siding, and in which the ends and edges of the abutting siding pieces terminate to provide a finished look. A second embodiment of the
20 corner trim does not employ a separate mounting, but rather incorporates a perimetric mounting strip that may be stapled directly to the wall sheathing.

Weldy, RE34, 547 describes a wall edging system for strengthening the wall intersections of buildings replacing the conventional metal corner bead used on drywall joints. The principal
25 element of the system is an extruded plastic strip having a thickened, arcuate central area and two outwardly extending flanges which are orthogonally oriented to one another, so that the thickened central portion runs along the seam between the orthogonally intersecting walls, and the flanges extend outwardly along the thickened central portion to be nailed into the drywall to secure the strip to the edge. Means is provided for providing a purchase for the

mud that is applied over the flanges, and in addition to the strip there are other pieces defining two-leg and three-leg inside and outside corners, these pieces having tongues extending from each of the legs which slip beneath the central, thickened portions of the adjacent linear strips to provide a secure meeting at the corner.

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Boomer, U.S. 2001/0045076 A1, describes a building component that is in the form of an elongate prefabricated cornice to be used in lengths around the top of a wall or walls or a room. The cornice has a mounting part and a facing part. The mounting part has a cross-section with two legs at an angle to each other. The outer edge of each leg terminates in a
10 reflexive bend with the outer portion of the bends inwardly directed. The facing part is a strap of material capable of being snap-fitted into or slid along the mounting part with the inside of each bend serving as a seat to receive a longitudinal edge of the facing part. A corner-piece is provided to join two adjacent lengths of cornice at a corner, the corner-piece being in two parts having a wall-mountable angle bracket and a correspondingly angled
15 cornice part to be secured thereto.

Stovax Limited, GB 2274860 describes a cornice that is formed of a series of similar ceramic elements arranged end-to-end. Each ceramic element has parallel flat ends, a concave decorative front face and a rear face. The elements are of substantially uniform
20 transverse cross section and are symmetrical about a central longitudinal axis. The rear face is bounded by a pair of flat, longitudinally extending marginal bonding surfaces which lie on mutually perpendicular planes. Each of the bonding surfaces joins a mutually perpendicular flat abutment face respectively which in turn join the front face. The length of each cornice element may equal that of a wall tile.

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The prior art teaches the use of artistic moldings for room appearance enhancement and of the use of corner pieces for adapting generally long linear tiles to a corner of a room. The prior art does not teach a linear tile having built-in corner turning portions at both ends or the use of inserts in a corner portion to adapt the moldings to a custom appearance or a thicker

corner portion to adapt abutting ends in an improved manner. The present invention fulfills these needs and provides further related advantages as described in the following summary.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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The present invention teaches certain benefits in construction and use which give rise to the objectives described below.

Because wall surfaces in buildings tend to be bowed or cupped (non-planar) and have rough
10 surfaces or rough spots, and because abutting walls tend to be misaligned at their joints, abutting tiles mounted thereon generally do not form perfectly matched butt joint seams. Three types of seam discrepancies exist. First, the top surfaces of the abutting tiles may not be coplanar so that a step discontinuity may be visible; second, the front decorative surfaces may not be at right angles at a wall abutment, so that the joint seam of the tiles may not be
15 closed at the front face, or if closed at the front face a gap will exist at the rear surface and closure of the seam at the front surface will vary in the seam along a vertical direction due to wall surface non-planarity. The third seam problem occurs when the abutting wall surfaces are not mutually vertical or are not mutually aligned when off-vertical so that the seam is only in true alignment at one point and unaligned at all other points. These three alignment
20 difficulties are grossly exaggerated in corners when a butt joint uses a pair of tiles where each is mounted to one of the walls. To complicate matters further, the molding process for cast or molded (plaster, plastic, etc.) parts does not result in identical sizes or thicknesses of the several portions of the tiles, because of mold variations and also variations in the molding materials component mix or ratios, amount of shrinkage and other variables in
25 production. The present invention reduces the number of seams required at a corner from two, using the prior art method of inserting a corner piece, to one, a reduction of 50%, and this results in a reduction of the same order of magnitude in the applied labor necessary to achieve a perfect integration of the several parts. Of course, this results in significant savings to the end user. Additionally, by forming a corner turning portion of the invention

with a step in surface continuity where the abutment exists, matching seams at abutments becomes very easy to accomplish and post installation labor is significantly reduced.

The instant solution provides a crown molding tile system where a first tile provides a laterally extensive linear portion, similar to common linear tiles, with a rear wall-engaging surface configured for surface-to-surface contact with a first generally flat wall. The linear portion terminates at both of its ends with an integral corner-turning portion which is relatively small as compared to the length of the linear portion. Thus only one tile need be manufactured for all applications with one of the corner turning portions cut off depending on which end is to be used to turn a corner. The rear wall-engaging surface of the corner-turning portion is oriented for contact with a second wall usually set at an approximately 90 degree angle or larger to the first wall. The corner-turning portion terminates laterally with a right-cut, non-mitered first edge, laying in a plane generally perpendicular to the second wall wherein the first edge abuts a second linear tile with an edge conforming to the first edge of the corner-turning portion, for forming a uniformly tight butt-seam. The corner-turning portion is thicker than the linear tiles or portions, so that wall misalignment problems are not visual in most cases. This is because it is easy to see a misalignment between abutting tiles which are meant to form a continuous smooth surface, but instead exhibit a break line, but it is difficult to see a misalignment when it is masked by a natural surface break or level change.

A primary objective of the present invention is to provide an apparatus and method of use of such apparatus that provides advantages not taught by the prior art.

Another objective is to provide such an invention capable of being more easily fitted to non-planar or misaligned wall surfaces while rendering an adequate appearance without excessive post mounting work to assure proper fitting of tile abutments.

A further objective is to provide such an invention capable of being fitted to inside and outside corners with improved butt joint appearance.

5 A still further objective is to provide such an invention capable of providing a continuous crown molding installation with fewer butt joints, while accommodating typical imperfectly aligned wall surfaces.

10 Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following more detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings illustrate the present invention. In such drawings:

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Figure 1 is a perspective view of the present invention as applied to an inside wall corner;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the present invention as applied to an outside wall corner;

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Figure 3 is a perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the invention shown as prior to placement of one portion;

Figure 4 is an enlarged view of Fig. 3 shown as after placement of the one portion;

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Figure 5A is a sectional view of a corner turning tile of the invention taken along cutting plane line 5-5 in Fig. 1 showing an insert prior to placement and the corner turning portion of greater thickness than abutting legs which are shown in phantom;

Figure 5B is a sectional view of a corner turning tile of the invention taken along cutting plane line 5-5 in Fig. 1 showing the insert assembled and the corner turning portion of lesser thickness than abutting legs which are shown in phantom;

Figure 6A is a sectional view of a corner turning tile of the invention taken along cutting plane line 6-6 in Fig. 2 showing an insert assembled and a corner turning portion of greater thickness than abutting legs which are shown in phantom; and

5 Figure 6B is a sectional view of a corner turning tile of the invention taken along cutting plane line 6-6 in Fig. 2 showing the insert assembled and a corner turning portion of lesser thickness than abutting legs which are shown in phantom.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

10 The above described drawing figures illustrate the invention in at least one of its preferred embodiments, which is further defined in detail in the following description. Those having ordinary skill in the art may be able to make alterations and modifications in the present invention without departing from its spirit and scope. Therefore, it must be understood that the illustrated embodiments have been set forth only for the purposes of example and that
15 they should not be taken as limiting the invention as defined in the following.

The present invention is a crown molding apparatus made up of individual tiles which are abutted to form a continuous molding strip, and a system made up of the assembly of the tiles. Now referring to the above defined figures, the separate pieces shown are referred to
20 herein as tiles of the system. The tiles are made of molded plaster or plastic in a manner that is well known in the art, and are formed in shapes represented as shown in the figures, but may be formed in alternate shapes as well. A front decorative surface 20 (Fig. 3) faces outwardly from a mounting wall surface 5 or 5' upon which the tiles are mounted, typically by screws or other hardware and/or bonding agents. In opposition to the front surface 20, the
25 tiles have a rear wall-engaging surface 30 abutting one or both of the wall surfaces 5, 5'.

The tile system is mounted onto the wall surfaces 5, 5' and, in this invention, in particular at corners where the wall surfaces 5 and 5' abut. In this description we define the "wall abutment vicinity" as those portions of the wall surfaces 5 and 5' that extend away from the

corner where the surfaces 5 and 5' actually meet by from about 5 to 10 inches, and of course includes the actual meeting of the surfaces at the corner. A tile that covers such a corner shall be referred to herein as a "corner turning portion" and labeled by the numeral 70 in the figures no matter if for an inside corner as in Fig. 1, or an outside corner as in Fig. 2. Tiles 5 that abut these corner turning portions 70 shall be referred to as "leg portions" 71, no matter if the leg portion 71 is integral with the corner turning portion 70, or if it is a separate part. Figure 3 shows both of these possibilities.

Now, referring to Fig. 3, a first corner turning portion 70 has a lateral extent, horizontally, 10 for covering the wall abutment vicinity of the wall surfaces 5, 5'. A horizontally oriented, linearly extensive, leg portion 71 (to the left) is integral with the first corner turning portion 70 and an interface 90 between the leg portion 71 and the corner turning portion 70 is defined by a thickness differential (Fig. 4), one being thicker than the other as shown in Figs. 5A, 5B, 6A and 6B. The advantage of having this thickness differential will be described 15 below. The tiles abut at surface 26.

Preferably, the corner-turning portion 70 provides a frontal recess 72 as best shown in Figs. 1 and 5A, and further comprises a separable frontal decorative insert 23 which is adapted for fitting within the frontal recess to provide a selectable decorative surface 24.

20 As shown in Fig. 3, a second corner turning portion 70 (at far left) may be formed integrally with the leg portion 71 and spaced apart from the first corner turning portion 70 in opposing juxtaposition. The second corner turning portion 70 also is formed having a horizontal, lateral extent, for covering the wall abutment vicinity. Again, an interface between the leg 25 portion 71 and the second corner turning portion 70 is defined by the thickness differential 90.

In Fig. 3 this is shown by thicknesses t and t' although, alternately, t' may be made thicker than t . Figs. 5B and 6B show this case.

- As shown in Fig. 3 the corner turning portion 70 may be integral with the leg portion 71 (shown at left in Fig. 3), or the leg portion 71 may be a separate part (shown at right in Fig. 3). As stated, in either case, the leg portions 71 are of a different thickness with respect to 5 the corner turning portions 70. This thickness differential 90 provides an advantage to the installer since it is easy to disguise non-uniformities in the mounting surfaces 5 and 5' by using a thickness differential. It is difficult to disguise misalignment where two tiles abut when they must match perfectly along a common joint line.
- 10 The enablements described in detail above are considered novel over the prior art of record and are considered critical to the operation of the instant invention and to the achievement of the above described objectives. The words used in this specification to describe the invention and its various embodiments are to be understood not only in the sense of their commonly defined meanings, but to include by special definition in this specification: 15 structure, material or acts beyond the scope of the commonly defined meanings. Thus if an element can be understood in the context of this specification as including more than one meaning, then its use must be understood as being generic to all possible meanings supported by the specification and by the word or words describing the element.
- 20 The definitions of the words or elements of this described invention and its various embodiments are, therefore, defined in this specification to include not only the combination of elements which are literally set forth, but all equivalent structure, material or acts for performing substantially the same function in substantially the same way to obtain substantially the same result. In this sense it is therefore contemplated that an equivalent 25 substitution of two or more elements may be made for any one of the elements in the invention and its various embodiments or that a single element may be substituted for two or more elements in a claim.

- Changes from the claimed subject matter as viewed by a person with ordinary skill in the art, now known or later devised, are expressly contemplated as being equivalents within the scope of the invention and its various embodiments. Therefore, obvious substitutions now or later known to one with ordinary skill in the art are defined to be within the scope of the defined elements. The invention and its various embodiments are thus to be understood to include what is specifically illustrated and described above, what is conceptually equivalent, what can be obviously substituted, and also what essentially incorporates the essential idea of the invention.
- 5
- 10 While the invention has been described with reference to at least one preferred embodiment, it is to be clearly understood by those skilled in the art that the invention is not limited thereto. Rather, the scope of the invention is to be interpreted only in conjunction with the appended claims and it is made clear, here, that the inventor(s) believe that the claimed subject matter is the invention.

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